

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2371

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 5152

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PORG, WA, SF

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: SAG TAKES TOUGH BUT NOT INFLEXIBLE STAND

1. FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE AUGUST 30 FOR NEW YORK (PRETORIA 5133) SUGGEST THAT THE SAG IS STILL STRIKING A HARD-BARGAINING POSITION ON NAMIBIA AND HOLDING OUT THE SPECTRE THAT IT MIGHT REJECT THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S PLAN AND PROCEED UNILATERALLY. AT THE SAME TIME, BOTHA WAS CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN ROOM FOR MANEUVER ON THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES.

2. BOTHA WAS STRONGEST ON THE QUESTION OF THE INDEPENDENCE DATE. FOURIE, ON THE OTHER HAND, IN A CONVERSATION WITH BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DAVID SCOTT, ON AUGUST 30, CONFIDENTIAL

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EMPHASIZED THAT THE SAG HAD "STRONG VIEWS" ON THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE UN FORCE AND THAT IF THERE WAS A SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION FOR A FORCE OF 5,000 TROOPS SUPPORTED BY OVER 1,000 CIVILIANS, HE THOUGHT IT QUITE POSSIBLE THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REJECT THE PLAN COMPLETELY.

3. WE BELIEVE THE SAG'S TOUGH POSTURE AT THIS POINT IS

LARGELY SHAPED WITH ITS DOMESTIC AUDIENCE IN MIND. BOTHA AND VORSTER WISH TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY ARE FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO CLOSELY SCRUTINIZE THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S PLAN TO SEE IF IT IS IN KEEPING WITH THE "LETTER AND SPIRIT" OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL.

4. WE DOUBT THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER AT THIS POINT BELIEVES THE ODDS ARE GOOD THAT HE COULD ACHIEVE ANY BASIC, FORMAL CHANGES IN THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S PLAN. BUT HE MAY WELL HOPE TO WIN SOME SATISFACTION IN INFORMAL COMMITMENTS FROM AHTISAARI, THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE WESTERN NATIONS. THE PROVISION IN THE UNPUBLISHED ANNEX TO THE SYG'S PLAN WHICH ALLOWS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING UN FORCES ONCE SAG FORCES HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO THE 1500 LEVEL, COULD BE INTERPRETED BY THE SAG AS MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE PLANNED REQUIREMENT FOR 7,000 UN MILITARY PERSONNEL. LIKEWISE, THE SUGGESTION CONTAINED IN THE CONTACT GROUP'S TALKING POINTS FOR SOUTH AFRICA (USUN 3362) OF A POSSIBLE TELESOPING OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IF AHTISAARI AND THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL DECIDE THAT CONDITIONS ARE APPROPRIATE, MIGHT ALSO BE TAKEN BY THE SAG AS A CONCESSION. THUS, WHILE THE SOUTH AFRICANS WILL BATTLE FOR EVERY CONCESSION THEY CAN OBTAIN, IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT BOTHA HAS PURPOSELY LEFT ROOM TO BE ABLE TO RATIONALIZE ACCEPTANCE ON THE BASIS OF SUCH "CLARIFICATIONS." CONFIDENTIAL

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5. ONE WOULD HOPE THAT MUYONGO'S ASSERTION (LUSAKA 3066) THAT SWAPO WANTS TO PROCEED PROMPTLY WITH THE SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION IS CORRECT AND THAT NUJOMA WILL INDEED APPEAR SHORTLY IN NEW YORK. HOWEVER, IF SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION IS DELAYED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 11 IN ACCORD WITH NIGERIA'S APPARENT CONSIDERATION FOR SWAPO, AND IF NUJOMA TAKES HIS TIME ABOUT GETTING TO NEW YORK (LAGOS 10836), THE SOUTH AFRICANS WILL FORCEFULLY DENOUNCE SUCH ACQUIESCENCE IN SWAPO'S SETTING THE PACE AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF PARTISANSHIP AND BAD FAITH ON THE PART OF THE UN AND THE FIVE. BOTHA WOULD PROBABLY GRANDSTAND AGAIN, BOTH FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION AND IN THE HOPE OF GAINING SOME EXTERNAL SYMPATHY AND SOME CONCESSIONS. DELAY WOULD ALSO HELP THE SAG JUSTIFY ATTACHING RESERVATIONS TO ANY AGREEMENT IT GIVES TO COMMENCING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SETTLEMENT PLAN AND HELP BOTHA JUSTIFY WHAT HE IS LIKELY TO DO IN ANY CASE: WITHHOLD ACCEPTANCE UNTIL HE RETURNS TO PRETORIA FOR CABINET CONSULTATION AND DECISION ON THE SYG'S PLAN. EDMONDSON

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